per month and upto 50% of the highest pay in the Government.

(2) The maximum limit of retirement gratuity/death gratuity has been increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2.5 lakhs w.e.f. 1.4.95 and, subsequently, upto Rs. 3.5 lakhs w.e.f. 1.1.96.

(3) The minimum limit of family pension has been raised from Rs. 375/- to Rs. 1275/- per month. Further family pension shall be calculated at a uniform rate of 30% of basic pay in all cases instead of the slab system of 30%, 20% and 15%.

(4) Parents wholly dependent on the Government servant when he/she was alive have been included in the definition of 'family' provided the deceased employee has left behind neither widow nor child.

(5) The limit of commutation of pension has been raised from 33% to 40% of the pension from 1.1.1996.

(6) Ex-gratia payment in respect of CPF retirees and their family members has been revised with the benefit of Dearness Relief notified from time to time

(7) A fixed amount of Rs. 100/- per month has been allowed as Medical Allowance to Central Government pensioners residing in areas not covered under CGHS.

(8) The limit of GPF Deposit-linked Insurance Scheme has been enhanced from Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 60,000/-

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Role of National Seeds Corporation

1664. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the role of the National Seeds Corporation (NSC);

(b) whether there is any plan to expand the NSC;

(c) what are the accumulated losses;

(d) whether any joint ventures are mooted by the National Seeds Corporation; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The National Seeds Corporation (NSC), a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of the Ministry of Agriculture, Department Agriculture & Cooperation, was established in the year 1963 under the Companies Act, 1956. The objectives for which the Corporation was established were to produce and distribute seeds of high quality to the farmers and also to bring about awareness among the farming community towards utilisation of high quality seeds for ensuring better yields. It undertakes the production of breeder seeds in its own farms and foundation and certified seeds through contract growers, Agricultural Universities, State Seeds Corporation and State Farms Corporation of India. Apart from its commercial activities, NSC is serving an important objective of producing and distributing the seeds of such crops which are not commercially profitable.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The accumulated losses of the NSC were to the tune of Rs. 14.86 crore as per audited accounts of the years ending 31.3.1997.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Starvation Deaths in the Country

1665. SHRI RAJUBHAI A PARMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of starvation deaths reported from different States, and